



Malagasy language

FACTSHEET

Malagasy is an Austronesian language with elements from Swahili, Bantu, Sanskrit and Arabic. It is the official language of Madagascar, but that position is held jointly with French and all education after primary level is conducted in French.

There are numerous Malagasy dialects and as you move from district to district words may change. While there is a Malagasy 'national' language, which everyone understands, in Ifaty people speak the Vezo dialect and that is our main focus here.

It is possible to buy English/ Malagasy dictionaries and language books for National Malagasy in Toliara, but there is nothing available for the Vezo dialect spoken in the Toliara region. A small Malagasy-English Dictionary and Phrasebook by Janie Rasoloson is available on Amazon, which has proved useful to previous staff and volunteers.

Below is a table of simple words and phrases to get you get started, with a pronunciation guide. Once you get the hang of it, Malagasy pronunciation is not difficult. To start remember that o is pronounced oo as in look (unless it's ô then it's like the o in hot).

Numbers

Numbers	Vezo	Pronunciation	National	Pronunciation
1	Raiky	Ri-kee	Iray, iraika	I-ray, I-ri-ka
2	Roa	Roo-a		
3	Telo	Tay-loo		
4	Efatsy	Eh-fa-ts-ee	Efatra	Eh-fa-tra
5	Dimy	Dee-me		
6	Eny	Eh-ny	Enina	Eh-ny-na
7	Fito	Fee-to		
8	Valo	Va-loo		
9	Sivy	See-vee		
10	Folo	Foo-loo		

Words that are different in National Malagasy

English	Vezo	National	Pronunciation
Hello	Salama	Manakory	Man-a-koo-ry
Yes	Eka	eny	Eh-ny
No	Aha	Tsia	Ts-ee-a
I	Zaho / aho	Izaho / aho	Iza-hoo / ah-hoo
You	Iha	Ianao	Ee-an-ow
Good	Soa	Tsara	Ts-ara
Very good	Soa bibi	Tsara be	Ts-ara bay
Where (is)	Aia	Aiza	I-ee-za



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Useful Vezo words and phrases

English	Vezo Malagasy	Pronunciation
Hello	Salama	Sa-la-ma
What news? (a greeting in the Toliara region)	Vao vao?	Vo-vo
No news	Tsy misy vao vao	Ts-ee me-see vo-vo
Good bye	Veloma	Vel-oo-ma
Yes	Eka	Eh-ka
No	Aha	A-ha
Can you help me	Afaka manampy	A-fa-ka man-am-pee
Please / excuse me / sorry	Azafady	A-za-fady
Thank you	Misoatra	Me-sow-cha
You're welcome	Tsy misy fisaorana	Ts-ee me-see fis-a-or-ana
No Thank you	Aha Misaotra	A-ha me-sow-cha
What is your name?	Ia no anaranao?	Ia noo an-ara-now
My name is no anarako	Noo an-ara-koo
I	Zaho / aho	Za-hoo / ah-hoo
You	Iha	Ee-ha
I want / need / would like	Zaho mila	Za-hoo me-la
I do not want / need	Zaho tsy mila	Za-hoo ts-ee me-la
There is / Is there?	Misy	Me-see
There is none	Tsy misy	Ts-ee me-see
Good	Soa	Soo-a
Very good	Soa bibi	Soo-a be-be
Not good	Tsy soa	Ts-ee soo-a
Where (is)	Aia	I-ee-a
To go	Mandeha	Man-day-ha
I am ill	Marary zaho	Ma-ra-re za-hoo
How much is it?	Hoatrino?	Hoo-a-tree-noo
I want to buy ...	Tehividy ... aho	Te-hi-vidy ... ah-hoo
Here	Eto	Air-too
Stop	Oka	O-ka
Diving	Manirika	Ma-nee-rika
Fish	Fia	Fee-a
Coral	Hara	Ha-ra
Reef	Lohariaky	Loo-ha-ri-aky